



# MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

## Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting August 10th, 2018

Present: Peter MacLaren, Roger Nishi, Lori Klein, Jack Sharry, Ana Dan, June Anderson & Ted Fisher.  
Also, ED Jasmine Bigelow, Membership Services Coordinator Ginger Berkelhamer

Apologies: Amy Todisco, Brad Long, Jim Tabor, Kevin Begin

The Board meeting was called to order by the Secretary, Peter MacLaren (in the absence of Chair Amy Todisco) at 11:06 a.m. at the Mad River Taste Place Board Room. He expressed our thanks for the use of the room.

A quorum of 7 Directors was declared by the Chair.

### Minutes of prior meetings:

1. Moved by Lori that the minutes of the July 13th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by Jack. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website.

### Action Item Updates:

1. All prior action items not dealt with later in the meeting are included at the end with their current status, along with new action items.

### Financial Update:

1. The Treasurer, Roger, presented the latest reports, which had been distributed ahead of the meeting. No major issues.
2. The allocation of pre-paid dues in our accrual accounting still needs some adjustment, however this aspect will be much easier and resolved when we complete the full transition to QuickBooks.
3. The year-end will be finalized as closely as possible to present at the Annual Meeting, by minimizing deposits and payments during the last week of August.
4. Roger, Karen and Jasmine are meeting on Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup> to continue work on finalizing the reports.

### Membership Update:

1. The Membership Report was distributed before the meeting. Continued positive feedback from both current members and prospective members. 25 members have been visited so far to present the new benefits package options.
2. The opportunity for customization of benefits is attractive to some.
3. New suggestions include trying to create a Restaurant group, similar to the Lodging group.
4. Discussion ensued that also having a retailer group would be helpful. Based on the approximately semi-annual Lodging Group meetings, areas of common interest often emerge where the members can assist each other, or Chamber staff can provide help.
5. Given that new restaurants are opening over the coming months, we agreed to defer trying to set up a Restaurant group for now but revisit it later in the year. **Left for action with Jasmine and Ana.**
6. Ginger provided a synopsis of the interaction with members, and she expressed thanks to Jack and Kevin who had provided her with guidance. The Board agreed her approach is now well-tuned and effective!
7. Jasmine noted that she and Ginger are tracking carefully the benefits associated with each members' updated package to ensure fulfillment plans are addressed.

**Director's Report:**

1. The work plan covers all aspects of the focus for the coming year. A summarized version was sent to our members with the Annual Meeting package, and Jasmine will send the full version to the Board.
2. On an ongoing basis it is expected that priorities within the Work Plan will evolve, with some items being relegated to a "being done if possible" level. The ED will assess any such changes with the Exec Committee on an ongoing basis and update the Board at the regular meetings.
3. The ED goals are now aligned with the key priorities in the Strategic Plan.
4. Directors are encouraged to provide feedback on where they can help, and are requested to be ready to address requests for assistance from the ED.
5. The Marketing Plan will continue to leverage low cost/high impact items, building on the redesigned Website, the Blogs and Social Media. Noted that our Instagram feed is now highlighted on our Website home page.
6. Areas of focus will be tweaking emails to improve open rates, working with our webmaster on Website SEO, and working on some paid search.

**Annual Meeting Plans:**

1. The package was sent by email to all members on August 6<sup>th</sup> in line with the 30 days' notice required in the Bylaws. Follow ups will be sent during August. It's going to be a fun event, as well being informative!
2. Jasmine reminded everyone that we will have a short Board meeting starting at 4:30PM on September 6th at the 1824 House, just before the advertised start time of 5PM.
3. The plan is to have rolling updates on the past year's accomplishments and member accolades on the screen during the pre-meeting social time.
4. A suggested tag-line is "Invested in the Valley".
5. Dinner will be family style to enhance interaction and avoid the time needed for queuing for a buffet.

**Valley Events:**

1. Based on feedback from Lawson's and MRG, the ED recommends that rather than a big "What's new in the Valley" event that we have (at least) two events:
  - a. A Lawson's focused just before opening on a date TBC in early October
  - b. A skiing focused event pre-season in November held at Sugarbush. A focus on our uniqueness through independence, three hills, etc.Other events could follow in 2019, e.g. focused on Food, other Recreation, etc.
2. The Board endorsed this approach. Ted noted that the date for the Ski event needs to be finalized ASAP to avoid conflicts.
3. There is an opportunity to feature these events on MRVTV, including live streaming.
4. The ED noted that she is working with Lawson's to have a "curated" MRV promotional area in the tasting room, including a Kiosk, some high level MRV info, and directions to the Visitor Center.
5. Jasmine and Ginger will work out all the details and request help as needed.

**New Business:**

1. Jack opened a discussion on how we should operate as a Board in the coming year and ongoing, building on a discussion started at a prior Board meeting:
  - He proposed that we follow through on the plan laid out in the Bylaws two years ago to have less frequent Board meetings, nominally quarterly, with Board members having more of their time available to work on requests from the ED in our new Task format.
  - The ED and Exec Committee would continue to meet monthly, and summary reports would also be issued to the Board monthly.
  - Urgent votes can be taken by email, as also provided for in the Bylaws
  - He suggested this approach would be a much more efficient use of everyone's time, especially for the staff.
  - There was general agreement that we should consider moving in this direction, but that we need to better understand roles and responsibilities of the Directors with this approach. Jack undertook

to prepare and email to the Board a document outlining how he sees this model working, and we will discuss at the next meeting. **Action: Jack**

2. Agreed that printing material for Board meetings was unnecessary and wasteful. Board members are asked to review material emailed out ahead of time and make their own paper copies if needed.
3. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance. At the request of the Exec Committee Jasmine had investigated quotes for this coverage, which we do not currently have. \$1M of coverage would cost annually \$851 plus \$161 for Employee Practices coverage, or \$698 and \$144 respectively for \$500k. After some discussion, moved by Jack, seconded by Ana that we arrange for this insurance, with the Executive Committee to finalize the details of the amount of coverage. Carried. **Action: Exec Committee**
4. Peter advised that a joint meeting of the MRVPD Steering Committee and the Chamber Board is proposed for Thursday September 13<sup>th</sup> to hear the recommendations from the MRV Vitality Team. However, it is likely that this meeting will be postponed. (It subsequently has been postponed.) Several Board members stated a strong preference to arrange the meeting to start at 11:00 a.m., rather than in the evening, when it is rescheduled.

#### **Adjournment:**

1. Moved by June seconded by Lori. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

#### **Next Meeting:**

1. The next regular Board Meeting will be Thursday September 6<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the 1824 House, just prior to the Annual Meeting.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

#### **Open Action Items:**

1. Ana to speak with Peter Boynton. No update as yet. **Action Ana**
2. Include in the year-end report the major reasons for the deviation from the original 2017-18 budget. **Action: Roger**
3. Investigate setting up a Restaurant Group, later in the year. **Action: Jasmine and Ana**
4. Proposal for how the Board will operate with meetings quarterly. **Action: Jack**
5. Finalize Directors and Officers Liability Insurance. **Action: Executive Committee**

#### **Closed Action Items:**

1. Ski the Valley for next season. Will be a marketing approach, as opposed to an integrated pass. Will be addressed in the Marketing Plan. **Closed**
2. Roll out of Dashboard including additional elements. Will be addressed in the Work Plan. **Closed**
3. Do a media outreach to “announce” updated website when ready. Will be addressed in the Marketing Plan. **Closed**
4. Media kit that will be linked from our website. Will be addressed in the Marketing Plan. **Closed**
5. Sponsorships. How sponsors could appear on our website in various ways. Will be addressed in the Marketing Plan. **Closed**
6. Kevin to participate in a meeting with Cabot. Will be done shortly (in fact now done). **Closed**
7. Reach out to other Stowe businesses to get their perspective on the impact of the Alchemist opening. Will be addressed in the Marketing Plan. **Closed**
8. Plan a Mad River Valley outreach during the opening month of Lawson’s. In progress as part of the Marketing Plan. **Closed.**
9. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. Meeting scheduled. **Closed**

*Note that all action items that are included in the Work Plan/Marketing Plan are deemed closed as there is no need to record them separately.*

#### **Ongoing Reminders on next page...**

### **Ongoing Reminders:**

1. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. **Action: All**
2. Suggested speakers for Coffee Mornings. **Action: All**
3. Personal Interaction with members. **Action: All**
4. Encouraging new members to join. **Action: All**
5. Let Jasmine know ongoing of any critical member meetings that need to take place. **Action: All**